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LOYOLA BONSECOURS

CENTRE

FOR EXPLORATION IN THE ARTS



OFFICIALLY OPENED JUNE 2ND, 1965

445 ST. PAUL STREET EAST

THE CENTRE

The Loyola Bonsecours Centre was conceived in the fall of 1964 as a modest encouragement to exploration in the Arts and as a stimulus to the effective restoration of an historic area of our city known as 'Old Montreal'. Sponsored by Loyola College, the centre is being established by an organizing committee charged with developing and initiating the Centre's programme.

The Centre itself consists of the main floor of the house, presently divided into two parts, one serving as a studio, teaching and seminar area, the other as a gallery in which works of art may be exhibited. The 'garden' area of the back of the property has also been cleared of several hundred years' debris and rubble, and plans are to develop it as an outside meeting area.

The eventual use of the Loyola Bonsecours Studio will be itself a matter of trial and error. Initially the limited facilities of the east side of the main floor will permit the resident artist to execute paintings and show them. Instruction will also be given here.

As the facilities are developed to full capacity it seems that it can serve as a discussion and work area, for several art forms - painting, sculpture, photography, cinema, etc.

Approximately 60' x 30', the garden offers attractive possibilities for outdoor exhibits, 'coffee and talk', intimate readings and dramatic presentations. Completely walled in with entrance from the house and a narrow stone and brick passage from the street, the garden is removed from the sight and sound of the street, open to the sky with possibilities of temporary roofing as protection against the weather. The stone walls rise more than 25 feet, and it is suggested they are part of the original wall of the old town.

THE HOUSE

Known as the Charpente House, the building dates back perhaps as far as 1690. In that year a larger piece of land than the land on which the existing house is built was given to a Jacques Robitard. In 1710, ownership of the land was in the hands of Gabriel Antoine dit la Charpente. In 1731 there was a survey of the town, which listed a wooden house on the site south 30' x 18'.

In a diary belonging to Madame Begon, the wife of the Minister of New France before Bigot, she stated that the house belonging to Vincent Morant dit la Charpente (son of Gabriel), was noted as a meeting place for the Cafe society of the day. All the fancy ladies and their aristocratic husbands would eat scrumptious meals and drink the best of wines, until the wee hours of the morning. This was noted in her diary, dated 1749.

As there was another allocation of land in 1724, to Pierre Demerse dit Chedeville, of the land where the brick house now stands, it is possible that the fire-place found in the east wall of 447 St. Paul may have been that of another house. When 447 was built, they used the other house's wall, that is the house of Chedeville.

By linking itself with an old and historic area, Loyola would like to share in the renovation and renaissance of the historical centre of the City, Old Montreal.

